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# **PRISONERS UNITED**

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December 22, 2016 • Newsletter 1

**- LETTER OF APPRECIATION -**

**G**reetings and solidarity to each other and all who participated in our initial Hunger Strike to end the arbitrary use of solitary confinement and inhumane treatment in Santa Clara County Jails.

Before we set off into the body of this letter we would like to extend our respect and appreciation to all who participated and sacrificed to provoke change. Although we came from diverse backgrounds be it race, religion, color or creed we set out differences aside, interlocked arms forming a formidable force through civil disobedience in solidarity.

Allow the sacrifices each participant has made be inspiration to others to join in our struggle, allo our peaceful protest demonstrate the power of unity and the positive changes that can be effected when we view each other not as classification of inmates defined by the color of clothing issued to prisoners by administration but instead as human beings who share the same oppressive conditions.

For decades prisoners have been slammed down in solitary confinement, locked away from education and rehabilitation programs or barred from participating in fellowship of their faith due to administration beliefs...Meanwhile our families are being exploited with practices that amount to price gouging through exorbitant commissary and phone rates. While they survive in a region with rising rent cost plagued by a homeless epidemic in city with ordinances that throws people in jail for having no place to live...Let's be thankful we have religious leaders and community organizations like De-Bug who rally behind us to champion our cause and see us different, who are the difference, who see us as human beings, who are not persuaded by those in positions of authority whom define us by our allegations and classification rhetoric to pump fear in the heart of the public in their effort to kill our support base when they are preoccupied beating us to death like Michael Tyree...In the spirit of thankfulness perhaps one might consider reaching out to their family and friends letting them know they are appreciated; we appreciate you and yours for your support so Thank You!

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## **- LETTER OF APPRECIATION - CONTINUED...**

Before we bring this letter of appreciation to a close we would like to abreast the prisoner population that our hunger strike has not ended, it has been momentarily suspended. We gave administration (30) days to bring about tangible changes for the benefit of all prisoners. We will continue our efforts until all of our core demands have been met. We will not be duped by the superficial such as movie night and a snack, we must persist as a collective that stands firm on principle. We must not be deluded by a carrot on a stick offered to us by an oppressed system that is fueled by greed and political ambitions.

To prevail in our struggle for prisoners human rights we respectfully ask the prisoner population to exercise diplomacy for it is not in our own interest to engage in combat with one another when we are fighting together to improve our conditions of confinement. We ask those of you who sway influence in our housing unit to work with each other to resolve conflict peacefully by promoting prisoner solidarity. Let's try not to provide ammunition to the administration that allows them to justify the reasoning for the use of solitary confinement. Our goal is to promote our cause by unifying like-minded people to support our next planned Hunger strike...

In closing, we thank you for your time.

Truly,

**PRISONERS UNITED OF SILICON VALLEY**

## **- OFFICIAL UPDATES -**

### **October 21, 2016**

Prisoners formally in solitary have been programming together on the yard since Friday 10/21 with good spirits. They send their love and appreciation to all the organizations, individuals and media that showed support. Hunger Strike on suspension out of good faith that administration has:

#### **1. CLASSIFICATION:**

In 90 days, strikers will be able to down class based on behavior in to general population.

#### **2. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:**

Hunger strikers have been released from solitary with handshakes and hugs.

#### **3. CLOTHING AND HYGENE:**

Additional clothing has been ordered.

#### **4. OVERPRICED COMMISARY AND WELFARE FUND:**

Due to contract constraints with the commissary vendor, the Administration has agreed to subsidize lowering commissary prices through the Welfare fund, meanwhile shopping for another vendor after contract completion.

The hunger strike will continue its suspension until lasting changes with administration, classification and Gang Intel are met.

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**October 25, 2016**

We spoke with administration. In our discussion we made a few supplemental demands/requests:

**1. PHONES:**

We requested to install more phones in each unit which will be releasing more prisoners out to program, as each unit was designed for no more than one prisoner. In addition, installing sufficient phones will reduce the potential rise of inmate fights as a result of overlap. For example, 4C and 4B only have one phone in each pod. We ask to install at least (2) or (3) more phones per pod. All other units within Main Jail North should have at least (10) phones in each pod.

**2. TELEVISIONS:**

We requested at least one more television in the units that house a high capacity of prisoners to accommodate Spanish and Vietnamese speakers as well as to reduce the potential rise of inmate fights as a result of incapacity.

**3. SPORKS WITH HANDLES:**

We requested sporks (spoon/fork eating utensils) with handles.

**4. TATTOO REMOVAL PROGRAM:**

We requested a tattoo removal program.

There was a shortlist of additional request/demands we made. This was just an example of the few. Currently there is a total of 10 small yards, unfortunately only 1 yard is being occupied by prisoners formally in solitary leaving a majority of prisoners who are still in solitary due to the Administration's claim of incapacity.

**December 15, 2016**

Prisoners Have Been Downclassed And/or Re-housed To The 4th Floor

1. Prisoners formally in solitary, are now on 4th floor (Who and why is still a question?)
2. Prisoners who have been re-housed to the 4th floor are said to now only have 45 minutes of programming a day in comparison to 10 hours a day where they were housed prior.
3. Exercise shorts have yet to be received.
4. Commissary prices have yet to be reduced.

**December 22, 2016**

**PRISONERS UNITED OF SILICON VALLEY**

Previously the name PHRM (Prisoners Human Rights Movement) was used as a representative body to harness the Hunger Strike in Santa Clara County's Main Jail. The PHRM name was used due to lacking an actual name and was a direct inspiration to the PHRM in CDCR. Moving forward, we will now be known as Prisoners United of Silicon Valley.

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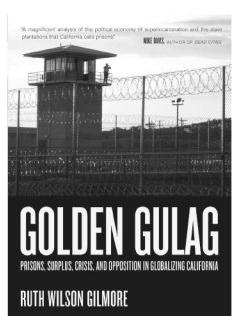
## - RECOMMENDED READINGS AND RESOURCES -

### RECOMMENDED READING

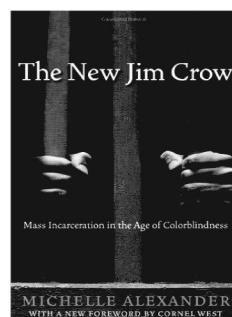
#### **Newsletters (Write to Request Newsletter)**

- San Francisco Bayview Newspaper  
4917 3rd St. San Francisco, CA 94102
- The Abolitionist c/o Critical Resistance  
1904 Franklin St. STE 504 Oakland, CA 94612
- PHSS News.  
1904 Franklin St. STE 507 Oakland, CA 94612
- The Fire Inside Newsletter  
1540 Market St. Room 490 San Francisco, CA 94102

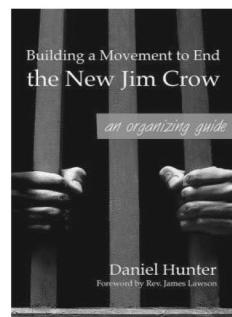
### Books



*The Golden Gulag*  
By Ruth Wilson-Gilmore



*The New Jim Crow:  
Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*  
By Michelle Alexander



*Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow:  
An Organizing Guide*  
By Daniel Hunter

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## **- WE ARE THE 13TH AMENDMENT! - BY JOSE VALLE**

Part of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution reads:

*“Neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime; whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”*

In other words, if you are doing time in county jails or the pinta, according to the Constitution, you are a slave!

Private prisons, prison labor, dropping inmates in the stock market, the phone calls from inside, commissary companies, the clothing, hygiene, and furnishing items, magazine subscriptions, the breaking down of pre-trial detainees, the entire industry securing jobs to C.O.'s, D.A.'s, judges, law enforcement, probation/parole officers, nurses, sheriffs, informants, Gang Unit/Intelligence/Investigators.... You name it! Everybody's getting their money!

As the majority in California pintas, making over 40% of the prison population, we as Raza are the 13th Amendment! There is no other culture in America, which has been impacted and identified with prison life quite like Raza has.

Unfortunately prison is one of the only true and real centers for maintaining the very essence of Chicanismo, our culture and movement. Not that Chicanismo originates from prison, but prison life is barely credited for its preservation.

Due to decades of isolation, things such as Oldies, speaking "Caló", our arte, rigid jeans and khakis, Aztec and Mayan culture, Chicano Pride, and connecting our existence to the Mexican Revolution has largely survived due to prison life. Our entire culture dating back to the Zoot Suit days(1920's-1940's) has been criminalized!

The Cholo style largely made famous during the Gangster Rap era derived almost exclusively from County, State, and Federally issued clothing; from Juvenile Hall, California Youth Authority, County Jail, Prison, and the U.S. Armed Forces. Ironically almost identical clothing is worn as work wear on the outside. The Cholo style is an expression of our social place in society, as blue collar workers, serving our country and serving time in prison; charismatically combined with Chicano pride and a Pachuco attitude.

Chicano Art is made up of simple, yet highly detailed folk art; and our generational testimony of resilience. Collages are made up of beautiful woman, prison bars, watchtowers, hour-glasses, Aztec warriors, Huelga Birds and Mexican Revolutionaries. No canvas, paint brush, gift of art, or years in Art school needed.... A blank sheet of paper, a pencil, and time is all you need. The same patterns are expressed on the human body, inked from hand-rigged

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single needle tattoo machines behind prison walls or in the garages of barrio artists.

Oldies or Soul ballads are as old as our identity itself yet surviving into our current century on Chuy Gomez's Sunday Night Oldies. Oldies song titles like Sonny Ozuna's "Put Me In Jail", The Moments' "Not On the Outside But Inside Strong", and Little Anthony's "I'm On the Outside Looking In" often have double meanings.

Chicano Caló, which is commonly misunderstood as "gangster slang", is in actuality a dialect developed by Pachucos between the Great Depression and World War II. The dialect is a mixture of English, Spanish, Black Jive and charisma! Words like "bonnerues" meaning your sharpest outfit, "firme" meaning good looking or smooth, and "trucha" meaning keep a look out, has survived almost exclusively by marginalized barrio youth and prison.

Juvenile Hall, California Youth Authority, County Jail and Prison has served as a time capsule for preserving an entire culture.

Racial profiling, COINTELPRO, CIA/Contra War dope, hard on Crime/Drug laws, Gang Enhancement laws, the CalGang Database, Classification, Correctional Officer brutality, the breaking down of pre-trial detainees and inmates on GP yards, and the S.H.U.; are all strategic moves to capitalize from securing the oppression of an entire people!

On the other side of the record, the second Mexicanos cross the border, they are already criminals! The very presence of undocumented Latinos living and working here in America is illegal. Our Raza, vulnerable and confined to slave labor and servitude in construction, moving companies, restaurants, housekeeping, and landscaping. Even if an immigrant is getting paid well, run their own small business, get paid under the table and are not getting pinched by taxes, they don't get the benefits many of us think are automatic. An immigrant doesn't get social security, a 401K, a retirement plan, food stamps, grants, worker's comp, or disability. An immigrant is also vulnerable to containment within the low class. A class of servants, laborers and service workers. And if you are an immigrant and catch a case, forget about it! It's all bad!

Our Raza, American born and immigrant, are subject to being the slave race of the United States! Condemned to a life in prison, slave labor and servitude. Meanwhile the budget, development, progress, and market of our state thrives and capitalizes on Raza doing time behind the walls and on the backs of hard-working Raza.

**In Califas, we are the 13th Amendment!**

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## **- RECOMMENDED RESOURCES -**

### **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

Prisoners Human Rights Movement Blue Print for a copy of this booklet. Write to Freedom Outreach and ask for the PHRM Blue Print providing that you cover the cost for mailing by sending either \$11.50 or the equivalent in unused postage stamps and mail to:

**Freedom Outreach/PHRM**  
Fruitvale Station  
PO Box 7354  
Oakland, CA 94601-3023

### **- WRITE TO DE-BUG SAN JOSE / PRISONERS UNITED OF SILICON VALLEY -**

The official clearing house for Prisoners United of Silicon Valley will be Silicon Valley De-Bug. If you would like a copy of this letter or to be added to our mailing list, send a self addressed stamped envelope to:

**ATTN: Jose Valle  
De-Bug San Jose/Prisoners United of Silicon Valley  
701 Lenzen Ave.  
San Jose, CA 95126**

We would like to hear from you.

Please fill out the questionnaire form on page 9 of this Newsletter to let us know the status of the conditions in your housing unit.

# **PRISONERS UNITED OF SILICON VALLEY**

**- NOTES -  
THIS PAGE IS FOR YOU TO WRITE DOWN NOTES**

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**- QUESTIONNAIRE FORM -  
ON NEXT PAGE**

**PRISONERS UNITED OF SILICON VALLEY  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PFN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethnicity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.) How many cells and beds are they in your unit?**

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- 2.) Does your unit come out in groups, if so how many prisoners to a group?**

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- 3.) Are you in a single cell, double cell or in a dorm setting?**

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- 4.) How many hours of cell time do you receive per week-not including outdoor yard?**

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- 5.) How many scheduled outdoor yard days are you offered per week?**

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- 6.) How many hours of outdoor yard time do you receive per week?**

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- 7.) What date did you arrive in this jail?**

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- 8.) How many times have you been down classed since your arrival?**

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**9.)** Have you been in disciplinary free for the past 90 days?

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**10.)** Have you been issued additional clothing (i.e.) wash cloth, thermal, (3) pairs of socks, (4) pairs of underwear ect.?

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**11.)** Has your condition of Confinement changed since the Hunger Strike was suspended, (briefly explain).

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**12.)** Have you been retaliated against in any way for your participation in the Hunger Strike? (briefly explain)

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**13.)** We invite any and all suggestion that one may have, should one have questions, comments, or concerns. We welcome those as well.

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On a separate sheet of paper answer this questionnaire and send your response to:

ATTN: Jose Valle  
De-Bug San Jose/Prisoners United of Silicon Valley  
701 Lenzen Ave.  
San Jose, CA 95126

Keep this letter in circulation to raise awareness.

In solidarity towards Justice,  
PRISONERS UNITED

Keep your family and friends in the loop!

@SV De-Bug (Facebook)  
@sv\_debug (Instagram)  
[www.sanjosedebug.org](http://www.sanjosedebug.org)  
#hungryforchange